President’s Chat

Getting the word out! It’s spring time and that’s what the birds are doing right now. Spring migration is well underway, and we have back our local breeders from their winter quarters. Birds everywhere in the county are advertising that they are around, are available for mates or are holding a territory. Song is filling the air, and they are sporting their best breeding colors.

Getting the word out is also important for bird clubs—in the spring season or any other season for that matter. We depend on membership dues, most of which go to MOS, to fund our activities, and we also need members to help out with our activities. We are rolling out some new ways in which you can all “get the word out” about MBC and possibly attract some new members to the club.

Thanks to Ed Vigezzi, we now have our own online store selling t-shirts, baseball caps, water bottles, mugs, and more. Just visit https://www.cafepress.com/montgomerybirdclub to make your selection. Like birds, you can dress up in different colors—the t-shirts come in five colors. We’ve also printed pamphlets and business cards for you to pick up at the next club meeting. Spring brings out many people onto the C&O Canal and who knows, they may be looking for a new club. Given annual turnover in members and that generally people seem to join clubs and organized activities less, we do need to recruit new members.

It’s been a real pleasure to have served as President of the club for the last two years. We are lucky to have so many enthusiastic and skilled birders in the county, and also to have so many who are willing to step up and help the club. I’ve had the good fortune to have had a great team to work with and it’s because of this that we’ve introduced new things to the club, including merchandise and being more active on social media.

I’d like to thank Scott Baron, Moira Davenport and Cheryl Hogue for agreeing to join the council for next year. Special thanks go to Evelyn Ralston who has agreed to become Vice President, which is the toughest job on the Council. And I’d like to thank the council members who are rotating off—Jim Moore who has put in many years of great service as a State Director, as well as Carolyn Smith.

I hope all of you will continue to engage with the club through field trips or meetings. Best of luck to the incoming President, Stephanie Lovell, who will be taking over the reins, including penning these letters!

Clive Harris

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May 16, 2018 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m. Gail Mackiernan on Madagascar. Gail Mackiernan will talk about her trip in which she explored this ancient land from south to north and recorded many of the island’s most sought-after species. Over 140 endemic species of birds (and five endemic bird families!) are found in Madagascar, as well as a fascinating supporting cast of lemurs, chameleons, frogs, weird insects and even stranger plants.

June 9, 2018 (Saturday), 5-8 p.m. Montgomery Bird Club Picnic. Please join us for the Montgomery Bird Club picnic at Black Hills Regional Park. Bring a dish to share—we will eat and then go birding in the early evening. Please remember no alcoholic drinks are allowed in the park—please bring sodas, water, and iced tea. Families are welcome!

Meetings take place at the Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Road, Potomac: From the Beltway, take Exit 39 (River Road/Rte. 190) towards Potomac. After crossing Falls Road (Rte. 189), continue a quarter-mile to Gary Road on the right. Turn right on Gary Road, then take an immediate left into the church parking area. (OK to park in the adjacent elementary school lot as well.) Meetings take place in the Fellowship Hall, ground level. Doors open at 7 p.m. Cancellation policy: Club meetings are cancelled if Montgomery County schools have been closed. If you have questions, contact Stephanie Lovell, ctlovell1@yahoo.com or 240-242-3235.
May 4 (Friday) BIRDING BY EAR AT HUGHES HOLLOW. Tune up your ears as we listen for and learn to identify the songs and calls of migrant and local breeding birds. The trip will be geared to new birders but all are welcome. Meet at 7 a.m. at the parking lot at Hughes Hollow. Limit 10. Reservations required. For more information email the LEADER: Paul Woodward grackling@ATT.NET

May 6 (Sunday) IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE, BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE CHAPTER, CONSERVATION FARM. Half day. Once again, the B-CC Chapter is generously providing us access to this large private property south of Poolesville. Woods, hedgerows, streams, fields, and ponds provide a wide range of bird habitats, and migration should be well underway. Trip will start at 7 a.m. at the League’s Chapter-house. Reservations required. Limit 12. Driving directions will be provided to those who make reservations. For more information, contact the LEADER: Jim Nelson kingfishers2@verizon.net or 240-515-4517.

May 13 (Sunday) ROCK CREEK PARK, DC. Near peak time for migrant warblers, vireos, etc. Meet at 6:30 a.m. at Picnic Area #18, one-half mile below the Nature Center on Ridge Road. Reservations required. Call the leader for more information or specific directions. LEADER: Wallace Kornack (202) 338-7859.

June 2 (Sunday) OLD LEGISLATIVE ROAD, ALLEGANY COUNTY. This is a great spot for Henslow’s Sparrow and Golden-winged Warbler, both state-rare breeding species. We’ll also spend time birding along other country roads for Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, and more. Meet at the Urbana Park and Ride at 7:00 a.m. Limit: 10. Contact the LEADER: Gemma Radko 301-514-2894 or gradko@yahoo.com.

August 11 (Saturday) DELAWARE BAY COASTAL AREAS. Full day at Bombay Hook. Joint trip with the Audubon Naturalist Society. Shorebirds, marshbirds, and some songbirds. Bring sunscreen, hat, bug repellent, lunch, snacks and lots!! of water. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Bombay Hook Visitor Center parking lot. Reservations required. Limit: 15. LEADER: John Bjerke, johnbjerke1@mac.com. Cyndie Loeper will co-lead.

An Interview with Bruce Beehler, author of

North on the Wing: Travels with the Songbird Migration of Spring

A Montgomery Bird Club member and Maryland native who addressed the Montgomery Bird Club last year, Dr. Bruce Beehler studies birds and conservation full-time. He is a Research Associate at the Smithsonian Institution and was previously Conservation International’s Senior Director of the Asia-Pacific Region. He serves on the board of the Montgomery Bird Club’s parent organization, the Maryland Ornithological Society, and is widely considered the expert on New Guinea’s birds. More recently, however, he has turned his attentions to North America where he does a variety of birding and camping trips. Two springs ago, he set out on a journey to explore our migratory bird life, following migration north from Louisiana to northern Ontario in three months. He drew personal inspiration from his mother who read to him, as a child, about a similar expedition.

Patrick: What was your favorite part of the adventure?

Bruce: Overall, the wonder of this 3-month odyssey was visiting states, towns, and parks I had never before visited. Getting to know St. Joseph, Louisiana, or Karnack, Texas, or Wyalusing State Park, or Crex Meadows State Wildlife Area was a revelation. The discovery that there are so many little-known wonderful places, all populated with hospitable people, and enlivened with birds of all kinds.

Patrick: Which were some of the most interesting places or people you visited on the way?

Bruce: I will focus on some little-known treasures: Tensas National Wildlife Refuge (Louisiana) was the last refuge of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in the US. It was logged over in the 1940s but is now restored and is a great place to hear singing Swainson’s Warblers. Meeman-Shelby Forest Park in western Tennessee has magnificent forest and fills with migrants in spring. It is right on the east bank of the Mississippi. Trail of Tears State Park in eastern Missouri is enriched by seasonal migrants and the never-to-be-forgotten story of the forced migration of the Cherokee to Oklahoma. They crossed the Mississippi here where the park today stands. Hundreds died in crossing the great river. Effigy Mounds National Monument in northeastern Iowa, is the home to scores of Native American traditional earth sculptures in the form of bears, snakes, birds, and more.

Continued on page 7
Black Hill Regional Park, January 21. Leader: Gerry Hawkins. Participants: 5. This trip focused on waterfowl. We started at the Visitors Center and then visited the mostly frozen boat launch area and ended up at the Route 121 bridge over Little Seneca Lake. Highlights included good looks at 12 species of waterfowl, Pied-billed and Horned Grebes and American Coot. Waterfowl included 18 Common Goldeneyes, seven Canvasbacks, 12 Northern Pintails, 15 American Black Ducks, small numbers of Gadwall, Lesser Scaup, Buffleheads and Ruddy Ducks, and many Common and Hooded Mergansers among the hundreds of Mallards and Canada Geese. Non-waterfowl highlights included a presumed pair of adult Bald Eagles perched together in a tree.

Oaks Landfill (Private), February 4. Leader: Mark England. Participants: 12. Weather: Dreadful! -- 34 degrees with a steady, soaking rain. Species: Very few, but... Some very hardy (foolhardy?) birders joined me on a car-birding trip around the landfill. We had hoped for a bit of intermittent rain, when we could get out of our vehicles and look for sparrows or possible perched raptors, but with no letup in the rain, we made a slow pass around the entire property. But, we saw only a few Song Sparrows, and a lone Red-tailed Hawk, which flushed as we drove past. With the birds all hunkered down, we then drove to the top of the landfill, which is always the best spot to see Northern Harriers and (usually) Short-eared Owls. We caught a glimpse of a harrier on the way up and were encouraged by that. Then we parked at the very highest spot of the landfill and waited a good while but saw only a group of Mallard fly-bys and probable Red-winged Blackbirds. I decided it was worth checking the lower end of the landfill, as it was past 4:30, and Short-eared Owls should have been hunting by then, based on past experience. We picked up another couple of Northern Harriers, including a male “gray ghost”, and then drove slowly down the center road on the lower end of the landfill, trying to get a better look at the harriers. At the first grassy path to our left, I stopped the car, as Thomas Doebele and I were amazed to see a ground-roosting female Short-eared Owl right out in the open, no more than 20 feet away. I rolled my window down so Thomas could quickly snap some photos, then we moved up so others could see the bird. The owl did flush, but only flew a short distance, allowing the photographers in the group to get some great pictures, and the rest of us had superb views through either binoculars or the spotting scope. It was a very cooperative bird! Though most of us were cold and soaked, it was a happy group when we left at 5:30. Thanks to the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection for allowing MBC and ANS to hold these bird walks.

Informal Evening Bird Walk, March 7. Leader: Jim Green. Participants: 8. I normally do three locations starting on the bridge scanning the Potomac River at Riley’s Lock. A variety of waterfowl here included a Redhead amongst a flock of Greater Scaup, all 3 mergansers, an American Wigeon and 3 different grebes - Pied-billed, Horned and Red-necked. Our second stop was at Hughes Hollow. Ducks were minimal here with only flyover Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers and partially hidden views of Ring-necked Ducks. We had brief glimpses of the continuing Marsh Wren only when it flew brief distances and buried itself in the cattails. The setting sun made for some great landscape views. (Earlier in the day while scouting for the trip I counted at least 24 Tree Swallows so they’re back in good numbers and I heard the Pied-billed grebes’ unique calls that they make on potential breeding grounds.) Last stop was the old sunflower field on Sycamore Landing Road for American Woodcock display. Although they were not out in great numbers, the two (possibly three) American Woodcock did not disappoint. We enjoyed multiple displays on a chilly evening. Everybody had great looks at one on the ground while peenting. First peent was heard at 6:30 p.m. and last at 6:51 p.m.

Paxtun River Park—Jug Bay Natural Area, March 10. Leader: John Bjerke. Participants: 12. Species: 37. A joint trip of the Audubon Naturalist Society and Montgomery Bird Club ventured out in fine cool late winter weather. A flock of Tree Swallows chasing insects just above the river confirmed that spring was on the way. We had one brief sighting of a Rusty Blackbird; always a much-sought bird. A Brown Thrasher gave us a lengthy serenade as we scanned the river near the Visitor Center. We had about ten sightings of Bald Eagle (probably five individuals) and one of a Northern Harrier. Eastern Towhees were calling in several areas. Scraps in the roadway attracted three different White-breasted Nuthatches. Several Wood Ducks and a flock of Common Mergansers were present. Surprisingly, we had only one Osprey. An Eastern Phoebe was one more reminder that the season is changing.

Informal Evening Bird Walk, March 14. Leader: Jim Green. Participants: 11. The evening started slowly with almost nonexistent waterfowl on the Potomac River viewed from Riley’s Lock. Highlights were a Bonaparte Gull hightailing downriver with a few Ring-billed Gulls never to be seen again, a Horned Grebe, several Pied-billed Grebes and a distant Bald Eagle. Moving on to Hughes Hollow, we saw American Wigeon, Gadwall, Ring-necked Ducks and American Coots. Consensus was that the highlight at Hughes Hollow was hearing the unique hollow barking “gwop gwop gwop” calls of the Pied-billed Grebe. Last stop was the Sycamore Landing fields for the American Woodcock (AMWO) display. Despite the cold weather and some other obstacles that I will mention, these birds did not disappoint. However, everybody on the trip gave the AMWOS a bronze medal (possibly silver at best) by the end of the trip. We had a caravan of six cars following me slowly down the road. While adjacent to the AMWO field, I spotted a raptor perched on a snag ahead of me. Immediately, I assumed it was a Red-tailed Hawk or Red-shouldered Hawk. After getting my binocs on the bird, I jumped out of the car to let people know it was a Peregrine Falcon.
Before all could get on the Peregrine Falcon, it flew off and landed on another snag. It sat there for five minutes or more and everybody had nice scope views and many photos were taken. On these trips, I always pull halfway down the road and into the parking circle and turn around so that the cars are facing River Road. As we were approaching the location where I park, the driver of the last car mentioned that she saw a Barred Owl perched on a sapling near the field close to where we normally park the cars.

Once everybody was out of the cars, we quickly found the Barred Owl, then the spectacle began. As we were ready to walk out into the AMWO field, we suddenly heard a loud, REPETETIVE, harsh single syllable scolding call. Before we knew what happened the Peregrine Falcon had not only returned but flew across the field, swooping down about five feet from the Barred Owl and up into the nearby tree where I originally found the bird. It continuously squawked for another minute or so, and then flew off again to a distant perch. We then walked out into the field. Twice, before it was AMWO time, we saw the Barred Owl fly a short distance and each time the Peregrine Falcon came flying across the field and made a half-hearted swoop at the Barred Owl. It was only the second time in my birding experience that I heard vocalization from these falcons but never before close up and sustained like this event.

By this time the AMWO display seemed like an aftermath and with the Peregrine Falcon patrolling the area like it was, we didn’t know what to expect. Their display continued like usual business. There were an estimated four AMWOs and once again a nearby AMWO provided us with multiple displays and a brief look on the ground. First “peent” was heard at 7:35 p.m. and the last at 7:52 p.m. The Peregrine Falcon was either a female or first year bird. Nothing better than having a fun mix of birders on a field trip coupled with unique birding memories!

Informal Evening Bird Walk, March 15. Leader: Jim Green. Things were pretty quiet on the Potomac River at Riley’s Lock. A boat and kayak on the river didn’t help matters either but most of the waterfowl appeared to have moved out. We saw a Horned Grebe, Common Mergansers (flyovers) and a very cooperative Ruby-crowned Kinglet. At Hughes Hollow, there were great looks at American Wigeon, Ring-necked Ducks and Hooded Mergansers. A Wilson’s Snipe flew out of an impoundment and Pied-billed Grebes were heard.

With time to kill, we walked down Sycamore Landing Road. It was very quiet but heard and saw quite a few Mallards and Wood Ducks flushing from the wet woods between the two bridges. Once in the field, we saw displays of several American Woodcocks including one that repeatedly landed close to us. Everybody was able to get a brief look at one. First “peent” was heard at 7:38 p.m. and last at 7:55 p.m.

Montgomery County Birds of Note mid-January 2018 to early April 2018

Dave Roberts found two Greater White-fronted Geese on January 20 along Sugarland Road in the vicinity of Homestead Farm. Additional Greater White-fronted Goose sightings were made by Dave Czaplak at Rickman/Woodstock Equestrian Park near Dickerson on January 24 and Woody and Rae Dubois found one at Blue Mash on January 26. The Ross’s Goose reported was still being seen through January 14 at Black Hill Regional Park. Dave Czaplak found a Snow Goose at Homestead Farm on February 23. Orietta Estrada noted a male Eurasian Wigeon at Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary on March 14.

Red-throated Loons were seen on the Potomac River between Violette’s and Riley’s Locks in both February and March. Red-necked Grebes were also present in the same vicinity from mid-February to mid-March, with one first being noted by David Roberts on February 18. Stephen Davies reported a Red-necked Grebe at Black Hill Regional Park on February 10. Joshua Heiser found the first Yellow-crowned Night-Heron of the season in Rock Creek Park along Beach Drive on March 29. An American Bittern was a nice find on a Montgomery Bird Club field trip led by Mark England to the Oaks Landfill on February 10.

A great sighting by Daniel Sloan was a fly over Golden Eagle viewed from the Violette’s Lock parking lot on March 25. A pair of Sandhill Cranes continue to be seen with some regularity in the vicinity of Violette’s Lock as they fly over the river from Algonkian Park, Virginia to feed for the day in the Montgomery County Agricultural Zone. The crane pair was reported flying across the Potomac by Dave Czaplak on January 10 and found later that same day in a field off Willard Road near Poolesville by Paul Meyer. David Roberts and Russell Hillsley both reported seeing the Sandhill Crane pair over the Potomac River on separate days in February.

James Boughton found a Lesser Black-backed Gull on the Potomac adjacent to Violette’s Lock on February 24. Dave Czaplak noted an Iceland Gull at the Patton Turf Farm on February 26. Scott Baron reported two Short-eared Owls at the Oaks Landfill adjacent to Blue Mash on January 6. As many as three different Short-eared Owls were utilizing Oaks Landfill habitat this past winter. A Marsh Wren apparently decided to spend the winter at Hughes Hollow. The bird, initially found by Nathan Tea on January 20, was still being reported as of April 6. MaryAnn Todd and Dave Czaplak reported a single Lapland Longspur mixed in a flock of Horned Larks at the Patton Turf Farm on March 23. The Bethesda area Shiny Cowbird was last seen on January 14.

A few Red-breasted Nuthatch were seen in the county over the past months. Brett Hartl reported two Red-breasted Nuthatch along Cabin John Creek just upstream from MacArthur Blvd on January 19. Gail Mackiernan hosted three Purple Finch at her yard feeders in Silver Spring on January 4. Moira Davenport noted a Purple Finch in her North Potomac backyard on February 23. Nathan Tea noted a single Pine Siskin at Black Hill Regional Park on January 7. Joel Patton reported five Pine Siskins at his backyard feeder on February 17.

- Andy Martin
Montgomery Bird Club Social 2018

A number of newer members were among the sixty people that signed up for this event. Woodend Sanctuary provided the venue once again for our annual Social and Pam Oves ably assisted. The tables were covered by Helen Patton and Anna Uruciolo with lively table covers from Target! The many appetizers were delicious, thanks to all who shared. Next year we should have a recycling bag for all the plastic stuff we used! Andy Martin was assisted at the bar by his wife Karen. They did a fine job. Next year one of our members, Tom Kimbis, will be donating the wine! That's very generous, thank you. And speaking of donations, Smokey Glen Farm once again donated our meal. Many thanks for our delicious dinner! The Council is going to consider ways in which to thank Jim Sweet for his generosity by sending a donation to a program or facility for birds that they approve of. Our Member of the Year was Andy Martin, who over the years has been a stalwart of the club, donating his time leading trips, sorting books, acting as bartender, and writing the “Birds of Note” column among other things. Clive Harris presented him with Diane Ford’s lovely painting of a Swainson’s Thrush with a little stamp in the corner noting his interest in recording night calls of migrants.

Once again, our members photos were a highlight of the evening. Scott Young ably produced them on Power Point. We visited Colorado, Iceland, and Tunisia. Frank Witebsky had some engaging little videos of Peruvian and Ecuadorian birds that were surprising in that they really showed off the characteristics of the bird. Gail Mackiernan showed off several of the birds of Antarctica. We had a surprising and generous offer by the current President of the BCC Izaak Walton League, Jim Tate, to come out to Izaak Walton for our next Social. Many thanks to the men who folded up the tables and put away the chairs at the end of the evening. It was a big help to leave Woodend as neatly as we could!

I’m sure it was much appreciated. I hope to see you next year at our signature event.

Stephanie Lovell

David Gray – An Appreciation

The Montgomery Bird Club recently lost a beloved longtime member. David Gray, who passed away in early December, contributed in so many ways to birding in Maryland. He volunteered at the bird-bandling station at Adventure Sanctuary in Potomac, supervised a Bluebird trail at the Parklawn Memorial Cemetery, and participated in the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas, a seven-year effort published in 2010. In addition, David served as a chapter director for the Maryland Ornithological Society, planning meetings and creating a bulletin board of bird news for the organization.

Dave was also a wonderful conversationalist with wide-ranging interests, partly informed by his work with the Merchant Marines, NBC Chicago, NBC International in Nigeria, and the U.S. Information Service in India, Pakistan, Venezuela, Liberia, Malawi, and the Naval War College in Rhode Island. David Gray, with his good humor and unfailing courtesy, was always a pleasure to walk, work, and bird with. He is survived by his wife Helen Gray, also an avid birder, and their five children, eight grandchildren, and three great-grandsons.

—Elizabeth Bush

Contributions in David’s memory may be made to the Audubon Naturalist Society, 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.
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Patrick: Can you tell us a bit more about your inspiration for this work?

Bruce: Very simple. I wanted to re-do Edwin Way Teale’s 1947 spring journey from Florida to New Hampshire, memorialized in his 1951 Pulitzer Prize-winning book North with the Spring. Teale and his wife followed the birds and the procession of spring up the Appalachians. I decided to follow the course of the Mississippi into northern Ontario.

Patrick: How did your work in New Guinea influence you?

Bruce: Living for weeks out in the jungle of New Guinea taught me that the best way to get to know a place and its birdlife is to camp out in the forest and to wake up with the songs of the birds every morning.

Patrick: How does this work compare to Lost Worlds to you?

Bruce: My book, Lost Worlds, is very much the story of my career as a field ornithologist and conservationist working in the tropics. North on the Wing is about coming home to North America and returning to my intellectual roots. Tracing the spring migration of the wood warblers is very much a home-grown adventure, returning to the familiar processes and environments I had come to know and love as a young naturalist in the 1960s and 1970s.

Patrick: What are your next plans?

Bruce: I am toying with the idea of a field project that focuses on the migratory spectacles of the autumn. Think of the flocks of Broad-winged Hawks and Mississippi Kites passing south over Corpus Christi, Texas in September. Or the Monarch Butterflies heading to winter roosts in California. Or the Pronghorn funneling out of the mountains into the high plains of Wyoming. Or the spawning salmon and river-foraging Grizzlies in the Pacific Northwest. Millions of American Snout Butterflies swarm southward to the Rio Grande in November. There are scores of autumn movements of birds, mammals, butterflies, and other species that I would like to experience first-hand.

Patrick: Is there a “best bird” from your trip?

Bruce: I added four birds to my life list, but I think my best bird of the trip was a male Connecticut Warbler singing on territory in a Tamarack Bog in northern Ontario. I encountered just a single Connecticut Warbler on this trip, and his loud chattering song rang through that boreal forest that morning--unforgettable.

Patrick: What, if any, is the most important lesson you learned?

Bruce: There’s no place like home... I spent my professional life traveling to more than forty countries for work, and there is great satisfaction in coming back home and finding so many wonderful green spaces where nature still rules. These are treasures that we all should spend more time in and invest more effort in lobbying for their protection...

Patrick: What does your trip mean for conservation?

Bruce: The sobering news that Neotropical migratory songbirds have declined by 50% over the last half-century must impel us to work ever-harder to ensure the conservation of those critical places for these long-distance travelers: northern breeding habitat, critical stop-over sites mid-country and southward, and tropical forest where these wonderful birds spend their long winter season.

Bruce Beehler’s North on the Wing: Travels with the Songbird Migration of Spring is a must-read for those inspired by birds and their perilous journeys. His book, Lost Worlds, too, provides a fascinating outlook on grueling but rewarding field work, research, and conservation. He has published ten books and was featured on the “60 Minutes” piece about an expedition he

May 2018
Candidates for Officers and Directors 2018-2019

In accordance with Article V of the Montgomery Bird Club Constitution, at the April 18, 2018, Club meeting, the Nominating Committee will announce the following candidates to serve as officers and directors for the Club. Each person nominated has agreed to run and to serve if elected.

President: Stephanie Lovell
Vice-President: Evelyn Ralston
Secretary: Alice Jacobsen
Treasurer: Chris Wright
Chapter Director: Moira Davenport
Chapter Director: Cheryl Hogue
Chapter Director: Gail Mackiernan  (2019)
Chapter Director: Martha Morris (2019)
State Director: Scott Baron
State Director: Ed Vigezzi
State Director: Scott Young

There were no additional nominations from the floor, and nominations are now closed. The election will take place at the Club’s May 16 meeting. The Officers and the State Directors serve one-year terms. The Chapter Directors serve two-year terms.